

NEBRASKA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

NEWS RELEASE

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ARRA-FUNDED PROJECTS TO CREATE JOBS FOR 300 INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES

Jobs for more than 300 individuals with disabilities will be created for Nebraska residents through new and expanded projects funded by the federal American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, according to the state office of Vocational Rehabilitation.

The projects focus on building community partnerships that will increase employment-related services to individuals with disabilities. The increased availability of services is expected to lead to part-time or full-time jobs for more than 300 Nebraskans with disabilities over the next two years. The following new and expanded projects have been funded with ARRA funds:

- Employment Works, Inc. in Norfolk will receive \$180,000 to provide supported employment services for persons with acquired brain injury.
- Career Solutions, Ollie Webb Center, in Omaha, will receive \$149,831 to expand existing services to include supported employment services to persons with acquired brain injury.
- North Platte's Goodwill Industries of Greater Nebraska will receive \$180,812 to deliver supported employment services for individuals with cognitive impairments resulting from an acquired brain injury.
- Associated Builders and Contractors of Omaha will receive \$28,700 to establish a forklift operator training program.
- Omaha Tribe of Nebraska in Thurston County will receive \$51,840 to support a collaborative effort to develop a transportation system that allows tribal members, including persons with disabilities, to access jobs and services in the South Sioux City area.
- St. Francis Hospital in Grand Island will receive \$30,000 to provide a job coach for implementing Project Search, a program that uses a hospital setting to develop job skills and training for transition-age students that will lead to employment in the community.
- Good Samaritan Hospital in Kearney will receive \$32,000 to provide a job coach for implementing Project Search.
- The Autism Center of Nebraska in Omaha will receive \$194,897 to develop supported employment services to individuals with autism, including focused training on autism to Vocational Rehabilitation staff and businesses.

Vocational Rehabilitation has also designated ARRA funds for previously approved projects that were eligible for economic stimulus funding. These projects are:

- Expanding mental health agreements between Vocational Rehabilitation and community partners to increase services, allowing more individuals with mental illness to receive supported

employment services. The following community partners will receive additional funds for the current year:

- Community Alliance in Omaha, \$100,000.
- Mental Health Association in Lincoln, \$25,000.
- Liberty Center in Norfolk, \$10,000.
- Goodwill in Grand Island, \$75,000.
- Goodwill in North Platte, \$25,000.
- Cirrus House in Scottsbluff, \$25,000.
- Apogee in Columbus received \$50,000 to provide a job coach to assist employees based on the needs of individuals with disabilities.
- Goodwill in Grand Island received \$137,000 to provide work incentives planning and assistance to individuals in the Behavioral Health Program.
- Goodwill in Grand Island and Kearney received \$220,500 to provide supported employment services to individuals with acquired brain injury with a goal of competitive employment.

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